

The Latest

Customer Appreciation Days

August 23-28



We want to say thank you for being our customer, so to celebrate you, we are hosting Customer Appreciation Days later this month!

Raffle Prizes: Each branch is giving away \$400 in gift cards to local businesses. All Evergreen Bank Group customers will be automatically entered. Must be a customer by August 20, 2021 to qualify. Winners will be contacted the week of August 30.

Kitchen Kit*: Since many of us are cooking more meals at home these days, we thought a Kitchen Kit would be helpful. Pick up your Kitchen Kit the week of August 23 at any of our branches.

This is just our way of saying thank you for being an Evergreen Bank Group customer!

Oak Brook branch: 1515 W. 22nd St, Suite 100W, Oak Brook, IL 60523

Hinsdale branch: 1 Grant Square, Suite 100W, Hinsdale, IL 60521

Evergreen Park branch: 3842 W. 95th St, Evergreen Park, IL 60805

**While supplies last.*

Emergency Fund Basics

Give your finances a buffer

The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic downturn might have exposed how fragile your finances are. As the economy begins to recover, it's a good time to consider building an emergency fund to help protect you in the future. Consider this information as you start to put money away.

What is an emergency fund?

At the most basic level, Investopedia defines an emergency fund as “money stashed away that people can use in times of financial distress.” You might have a savings account, but if you routinely dip into it to pay bills or splurge on a big-ticket item, it's not a true emergency fund. The money in this fund is locked away for unexpected big expenses, like home repair following a disaster, illness, or the unexpected loss of a job. It also typically refers to assets you have easy access to, like in a financial institution, and solutions that don't require you to acquire additional debt, such as credit cards or loans.

How much to save?

When you're trying to calculate how much to save, there are a lot of opinions out there. That also means there's not a good one-size-fits-all solution. Most experts agree that your emergency fund should cover several months of lost pay, with Kendall Little of NextAdvisor and Time saying most sources say an average of three to six months of living expenses is a good goal to aim for. Since the pandemic, though, some advisors have bumped that up to eight months or a year of expenses, since that's how long our economy was disrupted.

In the end, only you and a trusted advisor can determine what goal fits you best. If your job is in a seasonal industry or you're a freelancer, Margarete Burnette of NerdWallet suggests aiming for a higher goal, since there could be periods of time where you aren't paid or work dries up. Even if your job makes saving a large lump sum of cash seem like a pipe dream, she suggests that even starting out with an emergency fund of \$500 is better than nothing and can help cover minor issues.

Where to start?

The first big step on your emergency savings journey is just setting your goal amount. Knowing exactly how much you want to save will help you chart your progress and keep you motivated, according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. From there, reaching your goal is easier if you set up a way to ensure you make regular contributions. This can be by adding money from your paycheck to a savings account on payday or charting your expenditures and putting the remaining money away. While you watch the account hit milestones, the CFPB notes that it's important to celebrate your success along the way.

With an emergency fund in place, it's easier for you to whether financial difficulties if they hit your family. It'll also give you peace of mind when you think about what the future might hold.



Creating a Budget Online

Online tools to make budgeting a breeze

Budgeting is notorious for being a hassle. Thanks to these mobile apps and web-based services, you won't have to pore over your finances for hours or mess around with spreadsheets. Here's a look at four online tools that take the tedium out of building a budget.

Goodbudget

Instead of fumbling with envelopes of cash in the checkout line, Goodbudget makes envelope-style budgeting a breeze. Since it's accessible across multiple devices, it's easy to share your budget with your significant other. NerdWallet singles out Goodbudget as unique since it doesn't involve linking your checking account, savings account, and credit cards, which could be seen as a benefit to users who are concerned about privacy. Rather, you'll have to manually input your balances. Afterward, you'll create expense categories called "envelopes." While the free version of the app offers access to two devices and a fixed number of categories, you can upgrade to the premium version for more benefits, like access for additional devices and an unlimited number of envelopes. The paid version of the app will run you \$60 per year, or \$7 monthly.



Buxfer

Looking to rein in your spending? Buxfer is a free tool that helps you define spending limits for different time frames. For instance, you can create a monthly budget for entertainment expenses, a yearly budget for major purchases, and a weekly budget for dining. Abby Hayes, a contributor to DoughRoller, noted Buxfer for its bill reminder, ability to automatically categorize your purchases, and its notification system, which alerts you if you've overspent on a category. It even creates easy-to-read reports to help you visualize your spending and saving habits. While Buxfer is primarily for budgeting, it also offers a tool to help you manage your investments. Buxfer is also easy to access, whether you're at home or on the go, since it offers both a browser version and an app for mobile devices.

You Need a Budget

Although You Need a Budget may look like a basic spreadsheet, this simple-but-powerful tool is popular with personal finance experts for a reason. It enables you to link your financial accounts for no-hassle budget calculations and transaction tracking. Hayes suggests linking your credit cards to YNAB to help you conquer your debt and become more aware of your spending. Once you have YNAB set up, you can quickly view your spending habits — and get an idea of where you over- and under-budget. If you deplete the funds in a certain expense category, YNAB makes it a breeze to rearrange your money to cover the cost. However, while YNAB is a powerful tool, it comes at a price. While it comes with 34 days of free access, it costs \$11.99 per month, or \$84 per year. It's available for both browsers and mobile devices.

Honeydue

Although Honeydue is a relative newcomer to the personal finance tool market, its innovative features may be just what your family needs. This free mobile app is geared towards couples who are working to manage their spending together. It allows you to centralize information on your financial accounts, investments, debts, and credit cards, so you can both have a clear view of what's going on with your money. Plus, it takes some of the hassle out of money management by providing bill reminders, spending limit notifications, and even a built-in chat system so you can check in on your significant other. NerdWallet notes that there are even privacy settings for your data so you can limit what you share with your partner.

In addition to budgeting with an app or web-based tool, you can supplement your efforts with guidance from a professional financial planner.

Knee-Friendly Exercises to Avoid Squats or Lunges

Don't let knee pain stop you from exercising

Summer is a great time to make good on your New Year's resolution to get back in shape. But, if your knees hurt, go-to exercises like squats and lunges can turn a self-improvement session into a world of pain. Luckily, there are plenty of alternatives you can use to stay fit without putting undue pressure on your knees.

Deadlifts

The term deadlift may conjure images of bodybuilders hoisting 1,000-pound barbells over their heads, but they're actually easy to do at home and quite kind to your knees. According to Kim Pieper from Get Healthy U, deadlifts are one of the best all-around exercises out there since they not only "target your glutes and hamstrings, but also your low back, middle back, traps, calves, forearms and core." To do them, all you need is a barbell or a set of dumbbells. Then, bend at the waist while holding your weight and return to a standing position, relying on your core muscles rather than your back or knees.

Banded lateral walk

If your knees are giving you trouble, it may not actually be their fault. In an article for SELF, Amy Marturana Winderl references physical therapist Brad Whitley's opinion on the matter. He believes that when patients experience pain during activities like squats or lunges, "it's often caused by lack of mobility or strength in the hips or ankles." Winderl suggests an exercise called a banded lateral walk, where you place an athletic band around your lower thighs, then take 10 wide steps in both directions. Even if it doesn't result in reduced knee pain overall, it's likely to tone your hip and leg muscles.

Reverse hyper

One of the best — and easiest — exercises you can do at home without using your knees at all is the reverse hyper. All you need to do is lay face down on a flat, elevated surface like a weight bench or even a coffee table. Position yourself so your hips are right near the edge, then slowly raise your legs so they're parallel to your back and hold the pose for 2 to 5 seconds. Cori Lefkowitz from Redefining Strength specifies that you should only use your glutes to lift your legs and be careful not to "hyperextend your back and lift way higher than parallel."

Low-impact Cardio

Running is one of the most popular forms of cardiovascular exercise. Unfortunately, it can also be a nightmare if you're dealing with bad knees. But there are a lot of ways to keep up with your cardio without inflaming your joints. The easiest method is to take daily walks at your own pace. After a few sessions, you'll know how far you can go before the pain crops up. Swimming is also a simple, low-impact exercise that will build muscles all over your body. You can also use an elliptical machine or a stationary bicycle to burn off some calories while sparing your knees the painful pressure of a treadmill.

Living with joint pain isn't easy, but these knee-friendly exercises can help you find a way to achieve your fitness goals in a way that works for you.



4 Entertaining Books About Female Spies

Female spies take on the world in these 4 entertaining works of fiction

Delving into a good book allows you to inhabit the lives of new characters, travel through time, and experience new places. In the following novels, inspired by real people and true events, the female protagonists give you access to their multiple identities, genius, and bravery as they weave through the world of espionage.

Trailblazing detective in the Windy City

Although a work of fiction, “Girl in Disguise” by Greer Macallister is inspired by Kate Warne, who became the Chicago-based Pinkerton Detectives’ first female detective. After losing her husband, Warne landed the job with the agency thanks to her gutsy, bold, and determined attitude. During the Civil War, she acted as a fearless spy and even crossed paths with one of the nation’s greatest leaders, Abraham Lincoln. As a detective, she donned many personas with expertise, using her intelligence and craftiness to seek out the truth for her clients and agency. She also shared her knowledge and spy secrets, training aspiring female detectives.

Network of secrets

“The Alice Network” by Kate Quinn intertwines together the stories of two women — Charlie St. Clair’s present and Eve Gardiner’s past. As Charlie searches for her long-lost cousin Rose, she encounters Eve Gardiner, a former WWI spy, a member of the intrepid Alice Network created by real-life spy Louise de Bettignies. Kate Quinn is a New York Times and USA Today bestselling author, and this novel proves her literary talent. Engaging, fast-paced, and emotional, you will be drawn to these characters as they face their demons, secure triumph, and find closure.



Cold War intrigue

Set in the 1980s, 1960s, and 1990s and inspired by real events, “American Spy” by Lauren Wilkinson focuses on Marie Mitchell, a young Black woman working as an agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigations. Feeling stuck in her FBI role, she is enthralled by an assignment from another government agency. The CIA tasks her with spying on the president of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara. Wilkinson crafts her novel in a unique way, having Marie pen her espionage exploits in a letter to her twin sons, creating an emotional connection you won’t be able to deny. Wilkinson examines Marie’s spy life, which challenges her morals and beliefs, along with her personal tragedies to construct a thrilling read and thought-provoking work of fiction.

WWII special operations

Real-life Special Operations Executive spy during WWII Virginia Hall takes center stage in “The Invisible Woman” by Erika Robuck. Yearning for something more than the life of a debutante and member of high society in Baltimore, Hall jumped at the chance for a new, exciting, and dangerous life as an Allied spy in Europe. She was determined to thwart the diabolical actions of the Nazis, which Robuck expertly spins in her page-turning and layered novel, backed by detailed and diligent historical research.

Risking their lives to forge a new path, save others, and uncover the truth, these female spies, beautifully depicted in these novels, will captivate your senses and may even inspire your own adventurous spirit. Take a moment to savor the strength and resiliency of these characters and their well-written stories.